

From the District Attorney



As Essex District Attorney, it is my duty to expeditiously and effectively prosecute juvenile crime to ensure the safety of our schools and communities. During the past few years, we have seen a disturbing increase in the number of serious crimes committed by our youth as well as a heightened level of violence associated with these acts.

Vigorous prosecution is not the only method to combat juvenile crime. Through the Juvenile and Youthful Diversion programs, first-time, nonviolent offenders may be offered intervention and remedial measures as an effective way to address their problems. The youths are held responsible for their actions and must complete a monitored program. These effective programs were initiated by, and are administered through, this office.

The success of the Juvenile and Youthful Diversion programs is dependent upon the continued collaboration of this office, court personnel, schools, local police, and other community agencies. It is essential that we work together to identify youth at risk and intervene before their behavior escalates to a level of serious criminal conduct.

I strongly believe that a comprehensive, balanced approach, such as the one provided by the Juvenile and Youthful Diversion programs, is a proper and effective way to confront juvenile crime. It seeks to ensure public safety while at the same time help youth at risk. It assists these youth in making the right decisions and ultimately in becoming responsible and productive citizens.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan W. Blodgett".

Jonathan W. Blodgett, Essex District Attorney

Juvenile and District Courts

Essex County Juvenile Court (Lawrence)
10 Railroad Street, Lawrence, MA 01841
(978) 725-8810

Essex County Juvenile Court (Lynn)
139 Central Avenue, Lynn, MA 01901
(781) 599-3890

Essex County Juvenile Court (Newburyport)
188 State Street, Newburyport, MA 01950
(978) 462-3511

Essex County Juvenile Court (Salem)
45 Congress Street, Salem, MA 01970
(978) 744-1562

Gloucester District Court
197 Main Street, Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 283-3701

Haverhill District Court
James P. Ginty Boulevard, Haverhill, MA 01830
(978) 374-0380

Ipswich District Court
188 State Street, Newburyport, MA 01950
(978) 462-3511

Lawrence District Court
Fenton Judicial Center
Two Appleton Street, Lawrence, MA 01840
(978) 683-4300

Lynn District Court
580 Essex Street, Lynn, MA 01901
(781) 581-3741

Peabody District Court
One Lowell Street, Peabody, MA 01960
(978) 532-4140

Newburyport District Court
188 State Street, Newburyport, MA 01950
(978) 462-3511

Salem District Court
65 Washington Street, Salem, MA 01970
(978) 744-5681



Juvenile Justice



Jonathan W. Blodgett
Essex District Attorney

Ten Federal Street
Salem, MA 01970
(978) 745-6610

www.mass.gov/da/essex

Juvenile Justice Program

The Essex District Attorney's Juvenile Justice Program balances prosecution with prevention services, thereby providing an effective response to juvenile crime in Essex County. The program offers a comprehensive array of services that address the causes of juvenile delinquency and violence in our schools and communities.

Juvenile Diversion Program

The Essex District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program is an innovative, national model that offers certain first-time, nonviolent juvenile offenders between the ages of 7 and 17 and their families an alternative to the juvenile court system. The program seeks to identify and address the causes of juvenile delinquency and prevent the further involvement of youth in the criminal justice system.

The program operates in the juvenile and district courts throughout Essex County. This prevention program began in 1981 and has evolved and expanded to meet the needs of youth and the communities in Essex County.

The Juvenile Diversion Program holds youth accountable for their actions. A juvenile offender must acknowledge responsibility for his or her behavior before entering the program. The juvenile signs a contract agreeing to participate in counseling and/or educational services, perform community service, and, when appropriate, pay restitution. A parent or guardian must be present at the intake meeting and sign the contract. If the juvenile successfully completes all program requirements, the District Attorney does not prosecute the case and the juvenile will not have a court record. If the juvenile does not successfully complete the program or voluntarily withdraws, the District Attorney brings the case forward for prosecution.

Youthful Diversion Program

Based on the model of Juvenile Diversion, the Youthful Diversion Program works with certain first-time young adult offenders between the ages of 17 and 21. The program was created in response to widespread community concern about the effects of underage substance abuse.

The program requires participants to receive counseling and/or educational services and perform community service. The counseling and educational components give young people the opportunity to discuss substance abuse and other high-risk behavior and to learn how to make better decisions.

The Youthful Diversion Program is available in all district courts in Essex County.

Community Collaborative Initiative

Community Collaborative Initiative meetings are designed to bring together schools, law enforcement, and state agencies on a regular basis to address youth violence and to enhance public safety.

Reducing youth violence requires a multidisciplinary, coordinated approach, which views prevention and early intervention as critical components. Because no single entity is capable of achieving the goal of creating safe schools and communities, Massachusetts General Law requires district attorneys to establish, implement, and coordinate regularly held meetings of police, schools, and community leaders to address the issue of youth violence. These meetings are currently being held in all school districts in Essex County. A key part of this coordinated effort is the ability of schools, law enforcement officials, and state agencies to share information concerning school safety and at-risk youth. Community-based collaboration is the key element in this mandate.

Prevention Initiatives

In addition to his firm commitment to investigate and prosecute all crimes, District Attorney Jonathan W. Blodgett has developed several prevention initiatives to promote public safety.

■ Choose to Refuse: *A Heroin and OxyContin Prevention Education Program*

Choose to Refuse is a six-session curriculum that helps youth understand the dangers of heroin and the illegal use of OxyContin and empowers them to refuse these drugs and to make better decisions in their lives.

Choose 2 Refuse is a 90-minute presentation offered as an introduction to new students or as a "booster" to students who have already participated in the longer program. Choose 2 Refuse includes video from teens who are in recovery from heroin and OxyContin addictions.

■ Underage Drinking: *Not Everyone Is Doing It*

Three presentations cover the legal, social, and physical consequences of underage drinking. Each presentation uses a combination of slides and video to educate students and their parents on the dangers of underage drinking. Video includes teens in recovery and teens who do not drink alcohol.

Middle school presentation provides new findings on the damaging effects of alcohol on the adolescent brain, peer pressure, and refusal skills.

High school presentation focuses on the legal consequences of drinking and driving, fake IDs, house parties, brain damage, victimization, and alcohol poisoning associated with underage drinking.

Adult presentation discusses the social host liability law, parental responsibility, and the powerful influence parents have on their children.